

What you need to know about COVID-19

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus. COVID-19 stands for **CO**rona **VI**rus **D**isease **2019**, the year it was discovered.

Transmission

The virus spreads from close contact with the respiratory droplets of a person with COVID-19. These droplets occur when someone coughs, sneezes, talks and breathes. Droplets can travel more than two metres/six feet when a person sings, laughs or talks loudly. You may also get COVID-19 by touching surfaces that have the virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Symptoms

Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear. The most common [symptoms](#) are a new or worsening fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and difficulty swallowing.

Older adults and children may also have general symptoms like chills, headaches, sleeping more than usual, feeling disoriented, confusion, muscle aches, dizziness, weakness, or falls.

Some children can get a very rare condition which causes inflammation. Seek medical attention right away if a child is not improving or gets a rash, long lasting fever, red eyes and/or swelling in their hands and feet.

Some people may have mild or no symptoms. People who have COVID-19 but do not have symptoms can still spread the virus. People with weakened immune systems, existing health conditions, or over the age of 60 are at higher risk for serious illness.

Steps to keep everyone safe

- Limit non-essential trips outside your home.
- Keep two metres/six feet distance from others.
- Wear a mask or face covering.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and objects.

- Stay home if you are feeling sick.
- Avoid close contact with other people who are sick.
- Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

Mask bylaw

As of July 7, 2020, everyone in Toronto must wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces. Wearing a mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Even when wearing a mask, it is important to wash your hands often, stay two metres/six feet from others, and stay home if you are sick. Learn more about the City of Toronto [mask bylaw](#) and how to make a [cloth mask](#).

Testing

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, get tested. Call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000, your health care provider, or an [assessment centre](#), if you have questions. [Test results](#) are available online. If your test is negative, you can stop self-isolating 24 hours after your symptoms have gone away. More information on self-isolation is below.

Self-isolation

Stay home and [self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you have:

- tested positive for COVID-19
- been in close contact with a person with COVID-19
- returned from travel outside of Canada, including the United States, in the past 14 days
- been directed by public health to do so.

Stay home and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, and [self-isolate](#) while you are waiting for your results.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 unless you are very sick. Call your health care provider if you need help to relieve the symptoms. Call 911 if you or someone else is having difficulty breathing.

Beware of fraud and scams

There are no drugs approved for the prevention of COVID-19. Phishing is when someone lies to convince you into giving them your personal information. Toronto Public Health staff will never ask for your credit card or social insurance number.

For more information: Visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.